

In Los Angeles a large group has been recently organized to study social insurance somewhat along the lines already started in San Francisco. In Los Angeles Mr. Roy V. Reppy, a very able attorney connected with the County Counsel's office, is leader of the group. It might be well if every little community had its little study group.

Dr. McCombs of New York and recently in San Francisco helping make a survey at the request of the Real Estate Board, made the statement that when a bill to establish health insurance was introduced in the New York legislature, the majority of the medical profession had never heard the term, or if they had, they did not know its meaning.

In September the San Francisco County Medical Society will devote an entire meeting to this subject. Dr. I. M. Rubinow will address us and we hope that he will not be obliged to discuss elementary matters. Dr. Lambert's report in *J. A. M. A.*, p. 1951, *et seq.*, No. 25, June 17, 1916, should be read by every member of the State Society. Further notice of the September meeting will be given in these columns.

RENÉ BINE.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW.

It is interesting every now and then, to stop and contrast our present knowledge of disease with views held some few years back. The etiology of aneurisms, which curiously enough have been very frequent in San Francisco, has long afforded an excellent field for speculation. A short time ago we came across a paper entitled: "The Predisposing Causes of Aneurism. A Statistical Inquiry," by John B. Hamilton, M. D., Supervising Surgeon-General of the U. S. Marine Hospital Service, Prof. of Surgery in University of Georgetown, Washington, D. C., *J. Am. Med. Sciences*, p. 386, Oct. 1885.

Hamilton starts with a very interesting historical review of the subject. He quotes the "Father of English Surgery" as believing that aneurisms were due to the impetuosity of the blood itself or to its character—too sharp, or thin, eroding the vessel or being highly fermented and bursting through. He mentions some who believe that syphilis or alcohol play an important role, and as many others, who to their own satisfaction, almost prove the contrary fact. He also quotes curious statistics as to the possible influence of nationality, occupation, complexion and social condition. He concludes that the only constant element among all the alleged causes of aneurism is that of climate; that neither syphilis nor alcoholism, nor occupation, nor heat alone, appears to have an appreciable influence on the causation of this disease. He says: "As to how far the influence of diet may extend in the production of aneurism, I have been unable to form any conclusion, but it is possible that certain kinds of foods may have a powerful influence."

He attributed the frequency of aneurisms in California in the early days to the fact that many

of the victims had come from cold northern climes to live in a mild, languid temperature. Retaining their old habits of life and living under new conditions, eating much meat, living on stimulants and excitement probably made them subject to diseases of the circulatory organs. But the climate gets most of the blame!

Compare this with the modern view that aneurisms are mainly due to syphilis, alcohol, hard work, lead poisoning, tobacco, gout, nephritis and especially the infectious diseases, and one can see how a few years produces changes of opinions.

R. B.

THE PREPAREDNESS PARADE.

This editorial comment is necessarily written before the occurrence of the much-advertised Preparedness Parade, July 22d, and in fact, as the parade is being held, this part of the *JOURNAL* is on the press. However, speaking from a future view of what is going on, it seems very probable that the parade will consist of very large numbers of persons, expressing emphatically their idea that this country should not close its eyes to the possibility of future trouble. And this is wise.

There are innumerable bromidic remarks to support this point of view, as for instance:

In time of peace prepare for war.

God helps the country with the heaviest guns.

Heaven helps the man who helps himself.

Pray to God, and keep your powder dry!

From these few quotations from the dim and distant past, it becomes evident that the idea of preparedness is not altogether new.

FOURTH OF JULY.

It is curiously interesting to notice how many papers comment upon the desirability of continuing a sane Fourth of July, thus eliminating a large number of deaths which formerly accompanied that joyous day, or immediately followed it, and how few of them make any note of the fact that the whole movement originated with, and was prosecuted by, the American Medical Association. Going a little further than this, it may be said with conservative justice that the idea and its prosecution originated with Dr. George H. Simmons, Editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The people of this country have very much to be thankful to the American Medical Association for, and not the least of these things is the campaign against ruthless killing on the Fourth of July.

In 1903 there were 4449 persons injured, including 466 killed, and with 406 deaths from lockjaw. Last year there were only 1165 injuries, with only one death from lockjaw. It would seem to a calm and unprejudiced observer that the people of this country ought to be somewhat grateful for cutting off these four hundred odd deaths from lockjaw each year.